

mother, perhaps subsequent death, and, with a rare exceptional possibility, the death of the child. He does not, however, in consequence of this opinion, propose any alteration of the doctrines of practice; for these, he remarks, are proper as they now stand, even under this view of the question. "But it would be a comfortable consideration to the practitioner, when he finds the operation of version improper or impossible, because he may have been called too late—as is too often the case where females attend to the ordinary obstetrical practice—or from any other cause, that he has a reasonable ground to believe that his case is not of so grave a character altogether as has been supposed."

However much comfort it may afford the practitioner, under the circumstances just noticed, to know the spontaneous delivery is possible, and often does occur in cases of shoulder presentation, still, even in the cases referred to, it would not be proper to endanger the mother's life by putting off too long a resort to evisceration and withdrawal by artificial means of the fœtus, in hopes of the occurrence of a spontaneous termination of the labour. In the early stage of a case of shoulder presentation, the possibility of such a termination should in no degree delay or influence the action of the physician; but, as Dr. Boling very correctly teaches: "In all cases in which the soft parts are well relaxed, and the os uteri fully dilated or dilatable, and the labour has not advanced so far, or the membranes been ruptured so long, and the uterus so forcibly contracted upon its contents, as to render the operation impracticable, without the exertion of a considerable degree of force, we should at once proceed to deliver by version. Where the membranes are ruptured, immediate action is the more imperatively called for, to avoid the increased difficulty to the operation which would be occasioned by the complete escape of the liquor amnii, and the rigid contraction of the uterus upon its contents."

The author's description of the mechanism of the process of spontaneous evolution in cases of shoulder presentation differs from that laid down by the leading writers on obstetrics; very materially, indeed, from that given by some, while from that presented by others its difference is less notable.

It is deserving of a careful examination; being, apparently, more nearly correct and exact than the descriptions usually given in the books. Were it not for its length, we should have been disposed to lay it before our readers.

Dr. Boling's directions for the management of cases of shoulder presentation are at once clear, precise, and judicious. We have not detected any important point in which they differ from those given by our most authoritative obstetricians, and usually followed out in practice. The views of the leading teachers of midwifery, in relation to the proper conducting of cases of parturition with shoulder presentation, are, in fact, adduced by the author in illustration or support of his own.

We are not informed whether the essay before us has been published for general circulation, or simply printed for distribution among the immediate friends of the author. It is one, we are convinced, that is well adapted for the instruction of the student, and to serve as a useful guide to the young practitioner, when the "troublesome task" of attending upon a case of parturition with presentation of the shoulder of the fœtus shall fall to his lot. D. F. C.

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ART. XXII.—*General Therapeutics and Materia Medica; adapted for a Medical Text-Book.* By RONLEY DUNLISON, M. D., Professor of Institutes of Medicine, &c. in Jefferson Medical College, in Philadelphia, &c. &c. With one hundred and eighty-seven illustrations. Fifth edition, revised and improved. Philadelphia: Blanchard & Lea, 1853. 2 vols. 8vo. pp. 556, 523.

WHEN the demand for any work is such, as in the one before us, to exhaust four editions, and to warrant the issuing of a fifth, we have tolerably conclusive evidence that it is one adapted to supply the wants of that class of readers for which it has been expressly prepared.

The treatise of Dr. Dunglison constitutes, unquestionably, a most excellent text-book for the use of students in the departments of medical science of which it treats. It presents a very faithful and able digest of the leading results of modern observation and reflection on the important questions of the action, mode of operation, and therapeutic effects of the principal articles of the materia medica; with a brief sketch of the natural and commercial history of the drugs in common use. Nor will the treatise be found unworthy of the notice of the practitioner as a ready and trustworthy book of reference, when the time and opportunity for consulting many and more copious works is wanting.

With his usual industry and accuracy, Dr. Dunglison, in the preparation of the present edition, has, besides thoroughly revising that portion of the treatise which relates to pharmacology, paid due attention to the facts and trustworthy observations, in reference to the several subjects embraced within its scope, that have been recorded, either at home or abroad, since the appearance of the last edition, so as to render it a faithful epitome of the existing condition of general therapeutics and materia medica.

D. F. C.

ART. XXIII.—*Institutions for the Insane, in Prussia, Austria, and Germany.* By PLINY EARLE, M. D., one of the Visiting Physicians to the Lunatic Asylum of the City of New York, &c. Utica, 1853. 8vo. pp. 229.

In the volume before us, Dr. Earle gives, in an interesting form, the record of a very extensive personal examination of many of the numerous institutions for the insane in Prussia, Austria, and Germany.

Familiar as we have become with all the prominent hospitals for the treatment of mental disease in Great Britain and France, only a limited number beyond these countries have been seen by any of our professional men, who have visited Europe for the purpose of profiting by the improvements which, within the last twenty or thirty years, have been introduced into most of these institutions. "A general impression appeared to prevail, indicated, it is true, more by negative than positive signs, that, aside from the countries mentioned, the nations of Europe had made but little progress in this department of the profession, and hence could furnish us nothing commensurate with the labour and expense necessary to its acquisition," and yet the literature of the Germans on this branch of medicine is able and voluminous. Much of it is, perhaps, unprofitable, as being devoted to a zealous advocacy of specious theories, but still containing a great amount of valuable information, and exhibiting very strikingly the talent and industry which, in that region, are devoted to the study of mental diseases.

Various institutions for the care of the insane, too, are to be found, throughout these countries, which have a deservedly high character for their liberal arrangements, and the admirable manner in which their whole service is performed.

During the summer of 1849, Dr. Earle visited many of these institutions, under peculiarly favorable circumstances for obtaining a knowledge of their actual condition. Long devoted to the study of diseases of the mind, and for several years engaged in the superintendence of a large American Hospital, he went abroad with a degree of practical knowledge of the subject, and a familiarity with the wants of such establishments, which rendered him well qualified to judge of the excellences, as well as the defects, which are to be found in abundance in the different German institutions.

The first chapter of the work before us is devoted to a brief history of insanity in Germany, of the German periodical and other literature on the subject, and an interesting notice of the prominent men who have been distinguished in this specialty—which, although receiving only a brief notice of our readers, will well repay an attentive perusal.